

Manyata (Belief-Systems/ Values)

The literal meaning of the word 'manyata' is to believe; i.e to accept as is what we have heard or what we have been told. Usually it relates to practices, values that one simply accepts. Neither are they discussed nor do we have the inquisitiveness to know the reality about them. Our entire life is based on our beliefs. 'I am what I am seen as. Others are what they are being seen as. God is what we have always heard him to be. Our Dharma is what we have been told.' We don't feel the need to know the truth because we feel (believe) that we already know it and hence there is nothing to know further; this is ignorance. In other words, the ego (rigidity/ firmness) in our beliefs is ignorance. If the beliefs remain as beliefs, i.e if we realize that these are only our beliefs then there exists a full possibility that the seed of gyan (knowledge about the Truth) will sprout and we will experience or Know (not believe blindly) the Truth. On the other hand, if we harden our belief systems then ego perpetrates and it breeds 'agyan' (ignorance).

This can be understood through an example- consider a person who has to play the role of a king in a play. Naturally the person will act as a king and will give his entire energy to do justice to the role. Although throughout the play he will behave like a king, the realization that it is just a play will also exist simultaneously. He knows that it is a role he is playing for some time and in reality he is not a king. However, if he forgets this and starts to behave like a king with others in his life outside of the play; he becomes an object of fun and ridicule. In other words, the instant he forgets reality he complicates his life.

One thing about which one must be very careful is to not let the beliefs become rigid. As soon as ego takes over, a veil falls over reality. While leading one's life one should be mindful of the fact that what he is being seen as is as real as a role-play and nothing more. For example, I, Bhagwati Prasad, consider that I only have to act as Bhagwati Prasad. In reality I am not Bhagwati Prasad. What I actually am, who I am; is not a matter of belief. It is a matter of knowing and for this, one needs guidance, grace of a Sadguru. One thing that is for sure is that I am not what I am seen as. Therefore even other living beings, who are associated with me, are also not what they are seen as or what I imagine them to be. So the question then is, Who am I? What am I? What is everything around me? If the thirst to know this question arises then nature will find a way to get these questions answered through someone. He who will enable unearth these answers is a Guru. With a Guru's grace and blessings it is possible to come out of the veil of belief systems and experience the Truth.

In conclusion, let beliefs remain as beliefs. Accept them as beliefs and don't confuse them as reality. Don't let ego or rigidity in your beliefs take you farther from the Truth. If the desire to know the truth is born, then submit (your ego) to a Sadguru. The result of this submission, is the experience of Truth, Liberation, realization of the Self.

Bhagwati Prasad, Delhi